

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 BIB-01 IO-10 ACDA-05 NIC-01

OMB-01 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /083 W

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R 051744Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7751

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 02017

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW, GE

SUBJECT: FRG-GDR RELATIONS

SUMMARY: RESPONSIBLE BONN OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE LAST WEEK'S BUNDESTAG DEBATE AND CRITICAL EAST GERMAN COMMENTS ON IT WILL SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE PROSPECTS FOR FRG-GDR NEGOTIATIONS ON THE GDR PACKAGE PROPOSAL. HOWEVER, THEY DETECT SOME RESERVE ON THE EAST GERMAN SIDE AT PRESENT WHICH THEY BELIEVE IS RELATED TO THE UNCLEAR SITUATION IN MOSCOW. OUR SOURCES THINK EAST GERMAN ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES SHOULD MAKE THE GDR RECEPTIVE TO FRG OFFERS, BUT THEY DO NOT COMMIT THEMSELVES ON WHEN FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BEGIN. END SUMMARY

1. WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FRG-GDR NEGOTIATIONS ON THE DECEMBER GDR PACKAGE OFFER WITH FRG OFFICIALS CONCERNED. WE ASKED IF THEY FELT CHANCEL-
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LOR SCHMIDT'S STATEMENTS IN THE GERMANY DEBATE IN THE

BUNDESTAG LAST WEEK, AND THE SUBSEQUENT CRITICISM FROM EAST BERLIN, WAS LIKELY TO HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS. WE ALSO NOTED WHAT STRUCK US AS A RATHER MARKED CHANGE IN TONE BETWEEN SCHMIDT'S VERY OPTIMISTIC PROGNOSIS IN THE DECEMBER BUNDESTAG DISCUSSION OF THE GDR PACKAGE OFFER AND HIS MORE CAREFUL, LESS UPBEAT TREATMENT LAST WEEK.

2. OUR CONTACTS TOOK THE LINE THAT THERE WAS NOT REALLY MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SCHMIDT DECEMBER AND JANUARY BUNDESTAG PERFORMANCES SO FAR AS SUBSTANCE WENT. IN DECEMBER THE OPPOSITION CRITICISM HAD BEEN SHRILL, AND THIS HAD CREATED A POLITICAL MOOD WHICH IMPELLED SCHMIDT TO GO ON TO THE OFFENSIVE IN DEFENDING THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IN RELATIONS WITH THE GDR. SINCE THEN THE POLITICAL HANDLING OF THE ISSUE HAD BECOME MORE RESTRAINED. THE CDU HAD REINED IN THEIR PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN ON FRG-GDR AFFAIRS, ABELEIN. IN LAST WEEK'S DEBATE THE OPPOSITION HAD ACCEPTED THE EASTERN TREATIES AND THE INNER-GERMAN AGREEMENT AS BINDING. THIS WAS IMPORTANT.

3. AS TO THE EAST GERMAN REACTION TO THE BUNDESTAG DEBATE LAST WEEK, OUR SOURCES FELT THE GDR HAD ADOPTED A RATHER CAREFUL PUBLIC STANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, THEIR CRITICISM HAD BEEN CHIEFLY IN THE FORM OF REPORTS FILED BY GDR CORRESPONDENTS IN BONN, RATHER THAN BY WAY OF "NEUES DEUTSCHLAND" EDITORIAL ARTICLE WHICH WOULD BE SEEN AS REFLECTING CENTRAL COMMITTEE THINKING. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE EAST GERMANS WERE ANNOYED AT THE DEBATE AND SCHMIDT'S FIRM TALK. THEY HAD SHOWN THIS IN POSTPONING BY ABOUT A WEEK A DISCUSSION PLANNED BETWEEN GAUS AND NIER ON TECHNICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS. MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, OUR SOURCES FELT THERE WAS UNCERTAINTY ON THE EAST

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 02017

GERMAN SIDE AT THE MOMENT BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION IN MOSCOW. IF THERE WERE ANY SOVIET LEADERSHIP REARRANGEMENTS IN THE WIND, WITH POSSIBLE POLICY IMPLICATIONS, THIS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE THE EAST GERMANS CAUTIOUS, AND IN TURN THIS COULD HAVE A DELAYING EFFECT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. OUR CONTACTS FELT GROWING EAST GERMAN ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES MAKE THE NEGOTIATIONS, WITH THE PROSPECTS FOR FRG ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS, ATTRACTIVE TO EAST BERLIN. THE SHARP RISE IN SOVIET OIL PRICES FOR THE GDR COUPLED WITH EAST GERMAN EXPORT PROBLEMS, AND THE PROBABILITY OF INTERNAL PRICE INCREASES, SHOULD CREATE FAVORABLE PROSPECTS FOR THE DISCUSSIONS. OUR CONTACTS WERE NON-COMMITAL ON WHEN THE FORMAL FRG-GDR NEGOTIATIONS WOULD ACTUALLY BEGIN. THEY SAID THAT SO FAR AS BONN WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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CERNED, THEY COULD START BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH, BUT MUCH DEPENDED ON THE EAST GERMAN SIDE AND, FOR THE REASONS GIVEN, IT WAS NOT SURE WHERE THE EAST GERMANS STOOD. IN ANY CASE, THE PREPARATIONS ON THE FRG SIDE WERE GOING FORWARD APACE.

5. COMMENT. THE FACT IS THAT SCHMIDT WAS BEARISH ON FRG-GDR RELATIONS IN THE BUNDESTAG LAST WEEK AS COMPARED WITH HIS PERFORMANCE IN DECEMBER. WE ASSUME HE DELIBERATELY BACKED UP IN ORDER NOT TO LAY HIMSELF OPEN TO FURTHER CHARGES OF CREATING UNDUE EXPECTATIONS --

CHARGES WHICH THE OPPOSITION WOULD BE GLAD TO USE IN
LAND ELECTION POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
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